

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 EA-11 OMB-01 FEA-02 SCI-06 TRSE-00

COME-00 INT-08 CIEP-02 NEA-10 AF-10 FPC-01 AEC-11

ACDA-19 STR-08 DRC-01 /204 W
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R 171715Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2766

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

US MISSION EC BRUSSELS 4683

OECD PARIS

UNCLAS ROME 0747

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: ENRG, IT

SUBJ: ENERGY: ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

STATE ALSO FOR T/IEP

REF: A) ROME 0674; B) STATE 6596

1. PRESIDENT OF STATE OIL COMPANY ENI, RAFFAELE GIROTTI, CONSIDERED TO BE HIGHLY KNOWLEDGEABLE AUTHORITY IN ENERGY MATTERS, IN TESTIMONY JANUARY 16 BEFORE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE INVESTIGATING ENERGY CRISIS OFFERED A NUMBER OF VIEWS ON PROSPECTS FOR ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES. GIROTTI SUGGESTED THAT ITALY WILL BY NECESSITY REMAIN OVERHELMINGLY DEPENDENT ON OIL (74 PERCENT OF 1972 ENERGY CONSUMPTION). HE FORESEES NO POSSIBILITY OF ITS RAPID SUBSTITUTION EITHER BY OTHER CURRENTLY AVAILABLE ENERGY
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SOURCES--E.G., COAL OR NUCLEAR--OR NEW SOURCES--E.G., NUCLEAR

FUSION, SOLAR--OR DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TECHNOLOGY TO PRODUCE CONVENTIONAL SOURCES--E.G., COAL GASSIFICATION, TAR SANDS, SHALE OIL--ALL OF WHICH REQUIRE ENORMOUS LEAD TIME.

2. GIROTTI NOTED FOLLOWING ELEMENTS WHICH HE FEELS WILL CONDITION FUTURE OIL AND ENERGY SUPPLY: A) IRREVERSIBILITY OF ABUNDANT ALTERNATE ENERGY SOURCES (NUCLEAR, NATURAL GAS, COAL, SYNTHETIC OIL); B) END OF ERA OF CHEAP, ABUNDANT ENERGY WITH LIKELIHOOD OF MAJOR OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES CHOOSING TO LIMIT PRODUCTION, ALTHOUGH NOT INTERRUPTING SUPPLY FOR LONG PERIODS; C) PROBABILITY THAT NEW NON-OPEC OIL DISCOVERIES WILL HAVE LITTLE APPRECIABLE EFFECT UPON PRESENT DOMINANT POSITION OF OPEC PRODUCERS; D) LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF PAY-OFF FROM DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SOURCES OR TECHNOLOGIES BEFORE LATE 1980S. NEVERTHELESS, BECAUSE OF ENORMOUS LEAD TIME REQUIRED, IMPERATIVE TO BEGIN IMMEDIATELY TO DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE SOURCES.

3. IN NUCLEAR ENERGY FIELD, GIROTTI NOTED THAT ENI HAS ACTIVE URANIUM EXPLORATION PROGRAM ABORAD, GIVEN PAUCITY OF DOMESTIC RESOURCES--THE SINGLE EXPLOITABLE DEPOSIT BEING THAT OF NOVAZZA IN VAL SERIANA WITH A KNOWN RESERVE OF 1500 TONS OF URANIUM OXIDE AS AGAINST ESTIMATED TOTAL ITALIAN REQUIREMENTS UP TO 1990 OF OVER 100,000 TONS.

4. GIROTTI POINTED OUT THAT ITALY'S VIRTUAL LACK OF COAL, TAR SANDS AND SHALE OIL RULE OUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH RESOURCES DOMESTICALLY. NEVERTHELESS, HE URGED ITALIAN PARTICIPATION IN FOREIGN INITIATIVES TO DEVELOP SUCH ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES WHICH, ALTHOUGH NOT BEING OF DIRECT BENEFIT TO ITALY, WOULD EASE WORLD ENERGY PICTURE. VOLPE

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